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MISCELLANY

THE SICKLE IN THE WHEAT

On the Atlantic seaboard November is the loveliest part of the year, not only because of cool nights, crisp morns and sunshiny noons but owing to the feast of beauty that Nature spreads before us at this time by day and by night. Delicious fruits, delightful flowers of autumn accompany the turn of the leaf; in our favored land the foliage takes on colors that seem to belong to another world . . . and yet, this has been the month to prove fatal to half a dozen painters! As if it were determined somewhere that they should be removed at the very end and climax of the most glorious turn of the revolving year. Yet, does not the pedantic poet say: "Autumn vigor gives equal, intenerating, milky grain?" while Dryden, if he had migrated to the colonies and sung the American seasons, would never have dared to make the following picture of the fall o' the leaf:

Autumn succeeds, a sober, tepid age,
Nor froze with fear, nor boiling into rage;
Last, Winter creeps along with tardy pace,
Sour is his front and furrowed is his face.

Of two of the painters gone away it may be said that the brilliant colors of our country affected their work to advantage after a preliminary session of youthfulness during which they succumbed for a time to the inferior atmospheric charms and color of Europe, namely: Ranger and Bunce. To the former especially we may apply the lines of Susan Coolidge:

The Autumn seems to cry for thee
Best lover of the Autumn days. . . .

Perhaps to the fact that Henry Ranger passed his 'prentice years in Holland rather than France or Germany is due the trend of his later work toward color, for not alone the old Dutch masters, but the modern school of Dutch landscape and marine has not feared to register the rich tones in nature and, so far as brushwork goes, has approved a laying on of the paint which few Frenchmen in the academical section have practised. When Ranger returned from Europe he had already a strong colorful method and as he went on painting American landscapes he learned more and more to throw the European aspect of nature overboard and discover an atmosphere and a color-scheme which exist here, and here only. He was a trifle dogmatic in his views of art, was Ranger; there was a bit of the pedagogue in him; but that made him for many years a force among the painters who wrought among the stately, old-worldly pastures of Lyme, Connecticut. Then he moved away to a smaller empire of his own, to Noank and an island on the edge of the Sound, where he could paint and perorate undisputed and undisturbed. His woodland and shore scenes have magnificent color and mass.

William Gedney Bunce was no less a racy character, no less an American, perhaps more so than Ranger, but he lingered much longer in Europe, especially in Venice, where he loved to compose color schemes far removed from the photographic appearance of the city of the lagoons, pictures he infused with some of the savor of his own eccentric personality—or gruff urbanity—if the paradox be forgivable. Bunce was remarkable for a narrow but well-defined color-sense and it was due to a preference among his own countrymen for pictures of Europe rather than those of American scenery that he painted Venice instead of Connecticut. Not that Americans alone were his patrons; no less a person than Queen Victoria was among his patrons. Had he been an Englishman, this would have made his fortune; but apparently the British do not think it necessary to imitate royalty in patronage of artists unless the latter are English; if foreigners, they often decline to follow suit. Whenever Bunce painted home landscapes his pictures were perhaps finer than those he made when abroad, but not so salable for the reason stated.

The death of William M. Chase is noted elsewhere. He also died in November.

A fourth painter who left us in November is Charles Noel Flagg, born in Brooklyn, but no less identified with Connecticut than Bunce and Ranger. His chief field was portraiture, but he taught at New Haven and Hartford and wrote a good deal. Peculiarly lively and attractive in manner, he was a social force wherever he went and his death affects a wider circle than that of either one of the others. He came of a family with many painters to show, during several generations; his brothers are Montgomery Flagg and Ernest Flagg, architect of the Singer and other important edifices.

Henry Ranger left a large estate and bequeathed \$200,000 to the National Academy of Design as a special fund for the purchase of paintings by American artists. Two-thirds of the income is to be devoted to works by painters over forty-four years of age and the other third may go to those of younger men. These pictures are to be donated to American institutions of art and to libraries having a gallery open to the public; but the National Gallery in Washington is to have the preference among the recipients, a first option under certain limitations as to time in making a choice. The Council of the Academy is to exercise the delicate function of choosing and bestowing these gifts.

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THE NEW DIME AND THE NICKEL

The new design for the silver ten-cent piece by A. A. Weinman is a fortunate change from the old one in so far as the head of liberty is concerned. That epicene lady on the old dime with the neck of